

of the period at which you may interpose your authority constitutionally, to withdraw the citizens of the United States from all further participation in those violations of human rights which have been so long continued on the unoffending inhabitants of Africa, and which the morality, the reputation, and the best interests of our country have long been eager to proscribe. (Sixth Annual Message, 1806. F. VIII., 492.)

SLAVERY.—My sentiments on the subject of slavery of negroes have long since been in the possession of the public, and time has only served to give them strong root. The love of justice and the love of country plead equally the cause of these people, and it is a moral reproach to us that they should have pleaded it so long in vain, and should have produced not a single effort, nay, I fear not much serious willingness to relieve them and ourselves from our present condition of moral and political reprobation. From those of the former generations who were in the fullness of age when I came into public life, which was while our controversy with England was on paper only, I soon saw that nothing was to be hoped. Nursed and educated in the daily habit of seeing the degraded condition, both bodily and mentally, of those unfortunate beings, not reflecting that that degradation was very much the work of themselves and their fathers, few minds have yet doubted but that they were as legitimate subjects of-property as their horses and cattle. The quiet and monotonous course of colonial life has been disturbed by no alarm and little reflection on the value of liberty. And alarm was taken at an enterprise on their own, it was not easy to carry them to the whole length of the principles which they invoked for themselves. In the first or second session of the legislature after I became a member, I drew on this subject the attention of Col. Bland, one of the oldest, ablest and most respected members, and he undertook to move for certain moderate extensions of protections of the laws of these people. I seconded his motion, and as a younger member was more spared in the debate; but he was denounced as an enemy of his country and was treated with the grossest indecorum. From an early stage of our revolution other and more distant duties were